



***A Review and Analysis of
Los Angeles County's Human Resources and
Civil Service Commission Processes***

Report Highlights

January 25, 2011

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Core Observation:

Our System Takes Too Long

- Front-end: job posting, hiring, Performance Evaluation (PE), Appraisal of Promotability (AP)
- Back-end: civil service appeal process

We Heard it from Management

- Board Offices
- County Executive Team
- 27 Department Managers

**Delays undermine ability to manage
Departments**

Delays undermine morale

We Heard it From Unions

- Coalition of County Unions (CCU)
- SEIU
- Teamsters

Employees can wait for years for resolution of their appeals

Task Force Saw it in Independent Research

Examined 25 recent civil service appeals

- Average time from granting hearing to first hearing date — 396 days
- Average time from granting hearing to final resolution – 717 days

Goals of Recommendations

- Resolve cases more quickly
- Protect employees' due process rights
- Keep a level playing field -- not biased for management or employees

Three Categories of Recommendations

1. Those requiring Civil Service rule changes
2. Those requiring Civil Service Commission procedure changes
3. Those that can be implemented administratively

1. Civil Service Rule Changes

Recommendation 7

**Eliminate *Proposed Decision*;
allow Civil Service Commission, upon
receipt of Hearing Officer report, to issue
a final decision**

- Reduces time to a decision by 3-6 months
- Both sides can still file written briefs and present oral arguments at Commission meetings
- Approach used by the City of Los Angeles

1. Civil Service Rule Changes

Recommendation 8

Convert the Pre-hearing conferences to formal settlement conferences

- Try to reach a settlement before the process goes to hearing

1. Civil Service Rule Changes

Recommendation 15

Eliminate Civil Service Commission's authority (or practice) of modifying management actions; limit authority to sustaining or overturning actions

- May encourage both sides to consider settlements
- Patterned after City of Los Angeles

1. Civil Service Rule Change

Recommendation 9a

Remove “discretionary” appeals from the Civil Service Commission’s purview

- Reduces workload, allowing Civil Service Commission to expedite appeals

2. Commission Procedural Change Recommendations 6a/6b

Ensure hearings begin expeditiously after a Hearing Officer is assigned, and limit continuances

- Eliminate as much as a *10-month* delay in the process

2. Commission Procedural Change

Recommendation 10a

Establish clear standards for Hearing Officers relating to timeliness and efficiency

- Communicate expectations of expeditious resolution of appeals

2. Commission Procedural Change and 3. Administrative Change

Recommendation 10b

Develop process to remove Hearing Officers that fail to meet standards of timeliness and efficiency

- NOT related to substance of decisions (pro or anti-management)
- Related only to procedural issues: expeditious resolution, granting continuances, adherence to standards in preparing reports

2. Commission Procedural Change and 3. Administrative Change

Recommendation 11

Review current Master Contract for Hearing Officers

- Can our current system be improved?
- Do our Hearing Officers have the right qualifications?

3. Administrative Change

Recommendation 12

Establish County-wide disciplinary guidelines

- Provide guidance to Departments and to Civil Service Commission on appropriateness of management actions
- Ensure equity and equal treatment across County Departments

3. Administrative Change

Recommendation 9b

Enhance DHR's role in handling of “discretionary” appeals

- Provide a real alternative to Civil Service Commission in a simpler, less costly, and faster process
- Ensure an equitable and fair process for employees

3. Administrative Change

Recommendation 13

Centralize responsibility for representing County before Civil Service Commission

- Advocacy skills are specialized skills not available in all Departments
- Shared learning when County wins or loses cases
- Single point for oversight of and transparency into appeals process

Summary

Recommendations streamline and enhance the process

- Reducing cycle time within system
- Encouraging settlements early in the process
- Reducing Civil Service Commission workload
- Providing full due process for employees
- System not biased